

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture: Invests \$1.5 million to improve health care for people living in rural Wisconsin

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STEVENS POINT, Wis., Aug. 11, 2022 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Director for Wisconsin Julie Lassa today announced that USDA is awarding \$1.5 million in grants to improve health care facilities in Wisconsin.

“Under the leadership of President Biden, Vice President Harris and Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, USDA is committed to making sure that people, no matter where they live, have access to high quality, reliable health care services,” Lassa said. “The Emergency Rural Health Care Grants announced today will help two rural Wisconsin critical access hospitals implement an electronic record keeping system and purchase needed medical equipment. This type of investment strengthens our rural health care infrastructure and is vital to the health and well-being of people living in small communities across our state.” [\[Audio: MP3, 714KB, 30 seconds\]](#)

The Biden-Harris Administration made these funds available in the [Emergency Rural Health Care Grants Programs](#) through its historic legislative package, the American Rescue Plan Act. The Act and this program are examples of the government’s ability to respond quickly to ensure every person and family has access to high-quality health care no matter their zip code.

USDA Rural Development promotes a healthy community and environment through the Emergency Rural Health Care Grants to make sure people, kids and families have access to the health care they need. The grants support the ability of rural communities to provide health care to the people and places in our country that often lack access.

The investments will help rural hospitals and health care providers implement telehealth and nutrition assistance programs, increase staffing to administer COVID-19 vaccines and testing, build or renovate facilities, and purchase medical supplies. They also will help regional partnerships, public bodies, nonprofits, and Tribes solve regional rural health care problems and build a stronger, more sustainable rural health care system in response to the pandemic.

For example, in Wisconsin:

- Lafayette County will use a \$1,000,000 grant to purchase equipment for a new [critical access hospital to be built in Darlington](#). The new facility will be located on a 36-acre parcel and designed to meet current and future needs of the community.
- [Burnett Medical Center, Inc.](#), will use a \$581,824 grant to help implement an electronic record keeping system for the critical access hospital, clinic, and skilled nursing facility. The grant will help cover costs associated with purchasing and installing the system, labor, software, and hosting.

Today's investments are made in coordination with a [recent announcement](#) made by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Under Secretary Xochitl Torres Small. USDA will announce additional awardees for Emergency Rural Health Care Grants in the coming weeks and months.